

Abroad

Bonn

End of a Gang?

The recent arrest of two men and a woman believed to be the last of the chieftains of the Red Army faction has put an official end to the era of the Baader-Meinhof gang, the high priests of sociological terrorism in postwar Germany. The Red Army faction sprang from the ranks of middle-class university students who, saturated with ideology, sought revenge on the Nazi past and on the bourgeois conformity and complacency of the 1970s. Systematic assassinations and large-scale robberies were their tools, paralleling the still-active Red Brigades in Italy. Now that the last of their known leaders have been caught, the German public and the German police are looking forward to a spell of relief. Much credit goes to Horst Herold, former chief of the West German Criminal Investigation Bureau, a unit specially organized to hunt terrorists. Herold, known as Big Brother, employed three thousand specialists who fed millions of facts into computers about almost everyone involved in left-wing activities, including details of how they traveled and what library books they borrowed. A new category of "possible suspect" was created that, along with such attractions as million-mark rewards for making a denunciation, created a "manhunt" atmosphere that disturbed some. A change of political attitude, however, has also played its part in the decline of terrorism in Germany. The universities today are no longer the incubators of violence they once were. Activists tend to expend their energies in causes such as the ecological or pacifist movements, and even to ally themselves with the traditional political parties. Nevertheless, the police are not relaxing completely. In 1982, there were 57 attacks against American personnel and property in the Federal Republic, and more than one hundred groups were identified as "revolutionary cells." For terrorism, it may only be a holiday.

Baghdad

Feelers

Iraq has put out feelers to Egypt in a move to heal the breach between the two Arab countries. This may herald a major change in internal politics in the Middle East. Iraq broke with Cairo over the latter's signing a peace treaty with Israel in 1979. Baghdad's position in its war with Iran, which has brought few successes, even of prestige, to the government, has doubtless been the main motive for this *démarche*, which took the form of an interview Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz gave recently to the Cairo daily *Al-Ahram*. Mr. Aziz said in the interview that he was prepared to meet a high-level Egyptian official either here or in Cairo. Iraq's move toward reconciliation is independently taken and not in conjunction with other Arab states that also broke with Cairo over the Israel treaty. This notably includes Syria, with which Iraq currently has bad relations, and which has been the Arab world's most implacable foe of any accommodation with the state of Israel.

Peking

Male Children Only

A combination of ancient prejudice and a new law requiring that married couples produce no more than one child

has had disastrous effects on female babies in China, according to a "Save the Baby Girls" campaign launched in the press here. Girl infants were sometimes drowned or deliberately abandoned in the rural China of the past, and the practice evidently continues today. The traditional Chinese yearning for male progeny, because of both the need for labor in the fields and the desire to have male descendants, survives into the present. Now that single-child families are becoming obligatory, the desirability of that child being a boy has risen. One result of this female infanticide is that in many communes there are now three boys for every two girls; finding wives for these boys in the future is a subject of some anxiety. All the more so since China is one of the few countries in the world that still have more men than women—51.5 to 48.5 per cent. The situation has alarmed Prime Minister Zhao Ziyang. In a recent report to the People's National Assembly, he said that "the whole of society must vigorously condemn these criminal acts of drowning of nurslings of the feminine sex, and the consequent pain inflicted on the mothers . . ." One palliative is to allow rural couples to have two children provided they move in with the wife's parents. According to Chinese tradition, a young couple lives with the husband's family.

Buenos Aires

Beef

The export value of Argentine beef, the most famous of this country's international commodities, dropped dramatically by almost \$200 million in the last year, reflecting the diminishing value of the Argentine peso. Although the amount of beef exported went up more than 15 per cent, especially in the categories of frozen and processed meat, the prices paid Argentine dealers fell from \$1.4 billion to well below \$1.2 billion. Argentina's biggest beef customer is the Soviet Union, taking well over a quarter of the export total. Egypt, the European Common Market, and Iraq are next in line.



Ross

Rotheo

"When Paul Newman says the arms race should stop, then the arms race *should* stop."